

VZCZCXRO4634
RR RUEHGR
DE RUEHSP #0353 1031808
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 131808Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8084
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0580

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 000353

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [ES](#) [TD](#)

SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR INAUGURATES NEWEST FOREIGN MISSION IN PORT OF SPAIN

¶1. On April 11, El Salvador became the latest country to open an embassy in Port of Spain, following Spain's inauguration of its presence here in November 2006 and the establishment of South Africa's mission in December 2006. This brings the total number of foreign missions resident in Port of Spain to twenty seven.

¶2. The simple inauguration ceremony was attended by T&T Foreign Minister Arnold Piggott and by visiting Salvadorean Foreign Minister Francisco Lainez. In his remarks, Piggott said that the recent spate of new resident foreign missions pointed increasingly to T&T as the "diplomatic capital of the Caribbean", and, given the country's growing economic strength, as the region's financial capital, too. Lainez hailed T&T as the gate to the Caribbean, as a leader of the independence movement in the region, and as a political, cultural and economic force. Lainez, who signed a visa waiver agreement with T&T as well as a technical and cultural cooperation accord during his brief stay, expressed the hope that the two countries would not only cooperate bilaterally but would also provide support to each other in international fora.

¶3. Speaking earlier at a breakfast meeting of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, Lainez invited local business executives to visit El Salvador which he described as the fastest-developing country in Central America, one that will be perfectly bilingual in Spanish and English by 2020.

¶4. COMMENT: The fast-growing number of foreign resident missions in Port of Spain reflects Prime Minister Patrick Manning's vision of T&T as a Caribbean economic power house punching above its weight in the global energy market place. Countries setting up missions in T&T find this country is a convenient gateway to the small island states of the eastern Caribbean. END COMMENT.

AUSTIN